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DE RUEHWN #0751/01 3651834  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 301834Z DEC 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6967  
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6968  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 000751

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/2018  
TAGS: PREL EINV MASS PHUM XL  
SUBJECT: SECURITY, ECONOMY, HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN  
FOCUS AS THE AMBASSADOR BIDS FAREWELL TO ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

Classified By: Ambassador Mary M. Ourisman Reason 1.4 (b/d)

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Summary  
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¶11. (C) In her farewell call on St. Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Denzil Douglas, the Ambassador highlighted successes in building cooperation between our countries during her tenure and expressed her hope for continued close cooperation in the future. The Ambassador cited ongoing cooperation on security, crime, and HIV/AIDS. PM Douglas welcomed U.S efforts to work with the region to strengthen security, combat HIV/AIDS and other health problems, and support the expansion of trade and investment. With UN General Assembly votes on human rights issues looming, the Ambassador urged Douglas to move to a more proactive approach reflective of St. Kitts own strong human rights traditions. Douglas agreed to take a closer look, and St. Kitts in fact shifted its votes to oppose Iran's No-Action motion. Douglas, whose country has battled a persistent secessionist push from Nevis, was less forthcoming on Kosovo's independence, noting it was being reviewed in CARICOM. The unresolved Angelus expropriation dispute capped off the conversation, with the PM recognizing the importance of bringing this to resolution to avoid any damage to St. Kitts, reputation as a location for foreign investment. End summary.

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Security, Crime and the Tourism Economy  
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¶12. (C) In a cordial and upbeat farewell call December 15, Ambassador Ourisman emphasized the importance of our close security cooperation to address the growing threats of crime and violence throughout the Caribbean. Responding to PM Douglas, concerns about gun crime, the Ambassador urged him to sign on to the e-TRACE program, which would allow St. Kitts law enforcement authorities to work with U.S. authorities to track the origin of illegal weapons. The ambassador reiterated the firm U.S. commitment to efforts to strengthen security and combat crime in the region. To this end, she invited the GOSKN to participate in security training programs onboard the USS Swift in Barbados in January and March 2009. Douglas expressed gratitude to the Ambassador for her consistent support on security issues and assured her the GOSKN will take advantage of the training

opportunities. Douglas told the Ambassador that crime and the global economy were his two biggest worries. With several large tourism development projects due to be completed in the next few years, the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis has staked its future in tourism. However, with 22 murders so far this year, St. Kitts and Nevis were facing alarming new levels of violent crime that could threaten its

emergence as a prime tourist destination. Douglas said he was determined to take a proactive approach to meet the crime challenge.

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HIV/AIDS and Diabetes  
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¶3. (C) The Ambassador reaffirmed U.S. support for combating HIV/AIDS and informed Douglas that the Caribbean would benefit from the President's new regional Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program. She noted that this marked the first time the PEPFAR program would tackle HIV/AIDS on a regional basis, and indicated that the Embassy would be working closely with him in his role as the led CARICOM Prime Minister for Health issues to develop the new program and coordinate its launch within the region. The Ambassador told Douglas that she had actively sought to heighten awareness in Washington of the region's concerns for non-communicable diseases such as diabetes. The Prime Minister said he and his fellow leaders would welcome U.S. engagement on what is an even larger health threat to these countries than HIV/AIDS.

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Summit of the Americas  
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¶4. (SBU) Noting that the first ever Summit of the Americas to be held in the Caribbean would likely be one of the new President's first foreign visits, the Ambassador urged PM Douglas to consider how the region might wish to take advantage of the upcoming Summit to profile a few key issues of priority interest to the Caribbean. Douglas said he was

looking forward to the Summit and would consider how the Caribbean leaders, could leverage the event to focus attention to some of their key concerns.

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Human Rights and Kosovo Independence  
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¶5. (C) The Ambassador told Douglas that one area she had hoped to see closer cooperation on during her tenure was in dealing with human rights issues in the United Nations - especially given the region's strong tradition of respect for human rights. She noted that it seemed paradoxical that St. Kitts would abstain from key human rights votes in the UN when the country was such a strong supporter of human rights at home. Noting that the UNGA plenary votes were coming up later in the week, she asked Douglas to oppose no-action motions on the upcoming UN human rights votes in plenary, specifically on the Iran resolution. Douglas assured the Ambassador that human rights are always important to St. Kitts and Nevis, and agreed to re-examine the issue (Note: Subsequently, St. Kitts voted against the Iran no-action motion in the UN plenary vote, a positive move. End note.) Turning to recognition of Kosovo, the Ambassador noted that 53 countries had recognized Kosovo, and urged the GOSKN to recognize the country's independence, especially in light of efforts Kosovo had undertaken to protect minority rights and the positive UN mission reports. Douglas assured the Ambassador the issue was under discussion within CARICOM, but made no commitments. (Comment: As a country that has faced a persistent secessionist movement from the island of Nevis, St. Kitts will likely be more wary than some of its CARICOM counterparts toward a recognition issue. End Comment.)

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Angelus Dispute  
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¶6. (C) Observing that she could not leave without addressing the longstanding Angelus investment dispute, the Ambassador asked the PM for the outcome of the latest meeting on the case. The PM informed her that the litigants in the Angelus property dispute had withdrawn their case and agreed to an

arbitration process. A board will now determine the value of the property and recommend compensation. Pointing out that two U.S. Senators and a Representative have contacted her on this issue, the Ambassador stressed the importance of resolving this matter fairly, given its implications for St. Kitts and Nevis's reputation as a destination for U.S. investment. She also noted to the PM that the Embassy was putting together a trade and investment seminar and a Country Commercial Guide for St. Kitts and Nevis, and said the Embassy wanted to portray St. Kitts and Nevis in the best possible light to potential investors. Douglas recognized that the country has "a bit of a black eye" when it comes to the Angelus case, and said the GOSKN will abide by the decision of the arbitrator.

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Comment  
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¶7. (C) The farewell meeting with Douglas, like most of the Ambassador's engagement with him, was warm and productive. Douglas, who has had a firm grip on office since 1995, appears to understand the challenges his country is facing and how he can address them working with the U.S. He has made a major commitment to tourism when he closed down St. Kitts sugar industry last year, but he recognizes how critical security and safety is to make a success of this, and will therefore continue working closely with us to address security threats. He also understands the importance of preserving St. Kitts, reputation as a good place for foreign investment, and while we welcome the apparent progress on the Angelus property dispute, it remains unclear how long the arbitration process will take to sort out. That Douglas followed up on the Ambassador's request on the Iran No Action motion, reflects his desire to demonstrate his goodwill toward the U.S. and his desire to continue working closely with us. We are fortunate that Douglas, a Medical Doctor, will be the lead Prime Minister on health and HIV/AIDS issues, as he can be counted on to play a constructive role in coordinating our new regional engagement on HIV/AIDS.

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